

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 175086  
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TO USMISSION SINAI  
INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY SANA

S E C R E T STATE 175086

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 366 - JULY 26, 1 77

MOSCOW, KUWAIT, SANA FOR AMBASSADORS

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

1. EGYPT-LIBYA. THE CEASEFIRE SEEMS TO BE HOLDING, BUT THE LIBYAN-EGYPTIAN BORDER CONFLICT HAS APPARENTLY SOLVED VERY LITTLE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. QADHAFI'S VENDETTA AGAINST SADAT CONTINUES, AND WE EXPECT THAT HE FEELS HONOR BOUND TO STRIKE BACK IN THE FUTURE, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY IN RENEWED MILITARY ACTIVITY ALONG THE BORDER.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 175086

2. SADAT'S ULTIMATE GOAL IN THE FIGHTING, THAT OF SPARKING A MILITARY COUP AGAINST QADHAFI, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN POORLY SERVED BY THE RECENT MILITARY ACTION, AT LEAST OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. LIBYAN PROPAGANDA AND AN UNDERCURRENT OF ANTI-EGYPTIAN XENOPHOBIA WITHIN THE LIBYAN POPULATION HAVE RESULTED TO SOME EXTENT

IN A RALLYING OF SUPPORT FOR QADHAFI. FURTHERMORE, ARAB PUBLIC CRITICISM, WHICH WAS FOCUSSED MORE ON EGYPT FOR CONTINUING THE CONFLICT THAN ON LIBYA FOR ALLEGEDLY PROVOKING IT, MAY HAVE BOOSTED QADHAFI'S STOCK AT HOME.

3. AT A MINIMUM, HOWEVER, EGYPT MADE TWO TELLING POINTS: LIBYA'S ARMED FORCES ARE NO MATCH FOR THOSE OF EGYPT AND FURTHER PROVOCATIONS ARE LIKELY TO BE MET WITH FORCE. WE ALSO SPECULATE THAT OPPONENTS OF QADHAFI WITHIN THE LIBYA MILITARY HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY EGYPT'S MILITARY STRENGTH. FUTURE EGYPTIAN SIGNALS THAT QADHAFI'S ENEMIES IN LIBYA CAN COUNT ON EGYPTIAN SUPPORT THEREBY WILL BE RENDERED MORE CREDIBLE.

4. DESPITE LIBYA'S REPORTED APPEAL FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN BACKING ON JULY 21, MOSCOW IS STICKING TO THE NEUTRAL COURSE IT FIRST ENUNCIATED ON JULY 22. OVER THE WEEKEND, RADIO MOSCOW'S ARABIC SERVICE AND THE TASS INTERNATIONAL WIRE BRIEFLY REPORTED THE FIGHTING, CITING BOTH LIBYAN AND EGYPTIAN MILITARY COMMUNIQUE. SOVIET EDITORIAL COMMENT FOCUSSED PRIMARILY ON THE THEME THAT THE CONFLICT WILL ONLY "PLEASE THE IMPERIALISTS, ZIONISTS, AND THEIR SUPPORTERS" (I.E., THE US ) AND ON WARNINGS THAT THE FIGHTING THREATENS TO UNDERMINE ARAB UNITY AT A TIME WHEN ISRAEL'S HARD-LINE GOVERNMENT MAKES ANY WEAKENING OF THE ARAB SIDE PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS. AT SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 175086

THE SAME TIME, THE SOVIETS HAVE UNDERSCORED THEIR OWN EXPRESSIONS OF "ANXIETY" AT THE PROSPECT OF FURTHER FIGHTING BY GIVING PROMINENT COVERAGE--AN IMPLICIT ENDORSEMENT--TO EFFORTS BY ARAFAT AND BOUMEDIENE TO MEDIATE THE CONFLICT.

5. MOSCOW'S EVEN-HANDEDNESS IN THE CURRENT CRISIS CONTRASTS MARKEDLY WITH THE KREMLIN'S PRO-LIBYAN BEHAVIOR DURING THE RISE IN EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN TENSIONS LAST APRIL. AT THAT TIME MOSCOW RAISED HACKLES IN CAIRO BY URGING OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS TO PRESSURE SADAT TO AVOID ANY ACTION AGAINST LIBYA. SOVIET NEUTRALITY AT PRESENT MAY BE PARTLY THE RESULT OF QADHAFI'S CULPABILITY IN SETTING OFF THE "URRENT FTGHTING BY RAIDING EGYPTIAN BORDER POSTS. IN ADDITION, THE KREMLIN MAY ALSO CALCULATE THAT BACKING LIBYA, WHICH MOSCOW CERTAINLY BELIEVES WOULD LOSE IN ANY ALL-OUT CONFLICT, MIGHT ENCOURAGE SADAT TO SETTLE

THE SCORE WITH QADHAFI ONCE AND FOR ALL, THUS UNDERMINING THE USSR'S CREDIBILITY AS A RELIABLE ALLY.

6. PROBABLY MORE SIGNIFICANT IN SOVIET CALCULATIONS,

HOWEVER, IS MOSCOW'S DESIRE TO AVOID YET ANOTHER DOWNTURN IN SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS WHICH WOULD UNDERCUT THE KREMLIN'S CURRENT EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN ITS IMAGE AS INDISPENSABLE TO THE ARAB SIDE IN ANY FUTURE ARAB-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS. MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS REMAIN SUSPICIOUS, PARTICULARLY AFTER THE BEGIN VISIT TO WASHINGTON, THAT THE US MAY AGAIN TRY TO EXCLUDE THE USSR FROM TALKS. THEREFORE, THEY ALMOST CERTAINLY WANT TO AVOID A MOVE THAT MIGHT DRIVE SADAT EVEN FURTHER IN THE DIRECTION OF WASHINGTON.  
(SECRET)

7. ISRAEL. EMBASSY TEL AVIV REPORTS THAT FORMER PRIME MINISTER RABIN HAS TAKEN BEGIN TO TASK FOR SUPPOSEDLY GLOSSING OVER US-ISRAELI DIFFERENCES DURING HIS VISIT  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 175086

TO WASHINGTON. IN A JULY 23 RADIO INTERVIEW, RABIN FAULTED BEGIN FOR FAILING TO TAKE ISRAEL'S CASE TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC IN AN EFFORT TO CHANGE US POLICY AND IMPLICITLY SANCTIONING THE US POSITION WHEN HE STRESSED THAT HIS TALKS HAD DEEPENDED US/ISRAELI FRIENDSHIP. THE EMBASSY POINTS OUT THAT IT IS CLEAR TO RABIN AND OTHERS IN TEL AVIV THAT BEGIN HAS EFFECTED A BASIC CHANGE IN STRATEGY WITH REGARD TO THE US AND THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. VANCE

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